



J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2766
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

December 1, 2004

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Connections for Children (Agency), a CalWORKs Stage 1 Childcare service contractor. The review was conducted as part of the Auditor-Controller's Centralized Contract Monitoring Pilot Project.

Background

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) contracts with Connections for Children, a private, non-profit, community-based organization that assists parents with childcare services. Connections for Children's services include explaining participant's childcare options and program rights, providing multilingual services to the participants upon request, consumer education information, and childcare referrals. Connections for Children is located in the Second, Third, and Fourth Districts.

DPSS pays Connections for Children a negotiated rate of \$126 per case per month. DPSS also pays Connections for Children approximately \$2,373 for nine-months for outreach services. For Fiscal Year 2003-04, DPSS paid Connections for Children approximately \$342,000.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Connections for Children provided the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated Connections for Children's ability to achieve planned services and staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included a review of Connections for Children's billing statements, participant case files, time sheets, and interviews with Connections for Children's staff, program participants, and service providers.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Results of Review

Generally, Connections for Children provided the services required by the County contract using the appropriate number of staff. Connections for Children explained childcare options, program rights, and consumer information to the program participants. In addition, Connections for Children provided multilingual services to the participants that requested the services.

In one instance, Connections for Children continued to provide childcare services to a program participant for 45 days beyond the deadline for participants to submit the appropriate documents to receive program services. The participant subsequently provided the documentation and was approved for services. To ensure that overpayments do not occur, we recommend Connections for Children management ensure that program participants provide the required documentation before childcare services are approved.

The details of our contract compliance review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

Review of Report

On October 1, 2004, we discussed our report with Connections for Children who concurred with our findings and agreed to submit a corrective action plan to DPSS within 30-days of this report. In addition, we notified DPSS of the results of our review and DPSS management will work with Connections for Children to implement the recommendations.

We thank Connections for Children for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC
Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Department of Public Social Services
Bryce Yokomizo, Director
Ida L. Rivera, Chief, Contract Management Division
Shirley Christensen, Chief, Gain Program Division
Karen Kaye, Executive Director, Connections for Children
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**CENTRALIZED CONTRACT MONITORING PILOT PROJECT
CalWORKs STAGE 1 CHILDCARE PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004
CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN**

BILLED SERVICES/CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether Connections for Children (Agency) provided the services billed in accordance with their contract and the program participants actually received those services.

Verification

We reviewed 20 program participant case files assigned to Connections for Children during March and April 2004. We also interviewed 39 program participants and 38 daycare providers. Our sample represents \$4,917 out of a total of \$47,532 that Connections for Children billed DPSS for the same period.

Results

Generally, Connections for Children provided the appropriate services required by the contract. Connections for Children provided multilingual services to participants that requested the services and each program participant received consumer education information. The 39 participants stated that the services met their expectations and that Connections for Children provided effective program orientation. The 38 service providers also stated that Connections for Children authorized childcare payments and paid them timely.

In one instance, Connections for Children continued to provide childcare services to a program participant for 45 days beyond the deadline for participants to submit the appropriate documents which would allow them to receive childcare services.

To ensure that overpayments do not occur, Connections for Children management should require program participants to provide the required documentation before childcare services are approved.

Recommendation

- 1. Connections for Children management require program participants to provide the required documentation before childcare services are approved.**

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**Objective**

Determine whether Connections for Children actual staffing levels did not significantly vary from planned staffing levels.

Verification

We interviewed 13 program staff to determine whether actual staffing levels were consistent with proposed staffing levels.

Results

Connections for Children's actual staffing levels did not significantly vary from the planned staffing levels required by its County contract.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

SERVICE LEVELS**Objectives**

Determine whether Connections for Children reported service levels did not significantly vary from planned service levels.

Verification

We reviewed invoices for March and April 2004, and compared to Connections for Children proposed service levels for the same period.

Results

For March and April 2004, Connections for Children's reported service levels averaged approximately 189 participant cases. This represents a decrease of approximately 27% from the budgeted service levels of 257 participant cases. The decrease in service levels is due to a decrease in the number of cases referred to the contractor by DPSS.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.



2701 OCEAN PARK BOULEVARD

SUITE 253

SANTA MONICA, CA 90405

310/452-3325

FAX 310/452-3984

www.cfc-ca.org

November 3, 2004

J. Tyler McCauley
Los Angeles County Auditor-controller
500 W. Temple, Room 525
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. McCauley:

Contract Review Response

We have reviewed the report issued by your Department and are in general agreement with the findings and recommendations. We will be submitting a corrective action plan to the Department of Public Social Services within 30 days that details our efforts to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

Please call me if you have any questions at 310-452-3325.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Kaye".

Karen Kaye
Executive Director
Connections For Children